



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter
1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



Issue 28 ~ 1-15 November 2006

A final word from Camp Taji, Iraq. As we prepare to redeploy, our missions continue, however we are devoting additional time to packing equipment and getting ready to receive our replacement units. The Soldiers of the Phoenix Battalion have done a tremendous job and are proud of their accomplishments. This final edition of the FRG newsletter highlights some of the excellent work your Soldiers have done over the past year.

RENEGADES

Coming Home

By CPT Walker, HHD Commander

Hello Renegade Families, this is the last time you will hear from us here in Iraq. It has been a long year and we are ready to get back. However, it has been a life changing experience for us, and the Soldiers have done well. This final deployment article will focus on some of the things that Renegade Soldiers have learned from their experience here in Iraq.

First, I want to congratulate two Soldiers. Every month, Soldiers from 1STB compete in a Soldier of the Month Board. This month however, the competition was for the Soldier of the Year. SPC Jerald Starks from the Commo Shop won Soldier of the year, and SGT William Harrison won NCO of the year. Congratulations to both of you.

Now, as we reflect on our year in Iraq, I pulled a few Soldiers from the company aside, and asked each to write about one valuable lesson that they learned during their year long tour in Iraq, this is what they had to say....

SPC Tommy Lee Kiger: Gunner for the Brigade Civil Affairs Officer

“This tour taught me that the Army is very diverse. Every Soldier has an individual mission, and every mission is important. I learned to appreciate the many aspects of our Brigade.”



SPC Kiger learns to appreciate diversity

SGT Jamie R. Wehmeyer: HHD Operations

“The burden of war is not only borne on the backs of the men and women who fight, but by the friends and family members who worry about their Soldiers in harms way.”

SGT William Harrison: PSD

“One positive thing that I have learned over the course of the year is, even though some people may disagree with this war, we as United States Soldiers have an obligation to bring stability and peace to this country. Always remembering in our minds that we also defend our country and it’s freedom.”

It has been an honor serving in this position, and I will never forget the men and women of HHD. Thank you and God bless.

This is Renegade 6, Out.

HURRICANE

Military Police Platoon

By CPT Use, MP Platoon Leader

It has truly been a privilege for me to serve with the Outlaws over the last year and a half. I have never before seen, such a dedicated and disciplined platoon of Soldiers. Each one of them is deserving of a respect and admiration that cannot be easily expressed in words. They have endured the heat and cold, the dust and rain, and a clever and resourceful enemy almost every day for the past 11 months. They are proud yet reserved; confident yet unassuming.

They have operated consistently in the Brigade’s most dangerous sectors with distinction and honor. That is their legacy. That is their reputation. They have been recognized at higher levels for their ability to effectively conduct missions in volatile areas.

My thanks to the following Non-Commissioned Officers cannot be adequately expressed: SFC Quinn, SSG Rodriguez, SSG Teske, and SGT Carlson. These leaders have been the backbone of the platoon, making certain that it always stood ready to accomplish its missions.

The actions of CPL Johnson, CPL Ross, CPL LaBonte, and CPL Breaux are also deserving of recognition. These men had the difficult job of putting their friendships aside and stepping into a new rank that required them to lead their peers. Seldom is there a more daunting task.

I am the most appreciative of the Soldiers. Their actions are what have driven the Platoon’s success. Their sacrifices and contributions are too many to list. The physical and mental strain that they have endured is beyond the comprehension of the average citizen. It is generations of Soldiers like these that have laid the foundation of our great nation. A debt of honor is owed to each of them.

We have been a surrogate family this past year, but it will soon be time to rejoin our real families. The memories of these fine Soldiers, my family, will stay with me for many years.

OUTLAWS!
LIVE FREE OR DIE...

Respectfully,

CHARLES D. USÉ
CPT, MP
Platoon Leader



Military Police Platoon

Support Platoon

By 1LT Grover, Support Platoon Leader

Greetings family and friends of the Support Platoon. I want to take the time to say thank you. Your love, support, and all you do for the Support Platoon team is vital to their success. As the month of October quickly passes, and time gets shorter, the Soldiers are continuing to stay focused on their mission. The weather is starting to get cooler, and the rainy season is beginning. The average temperature here is about 73 degrees in the day and 60 degrees at night.

To recap the month of October, the platoon continues to support the Charlie, 414th Civil Affairs Company throughout the 1st Brigade's area of operations. This month, the team that is responsible for Saab al Bor, led by CPT Hanson, conducted a food distribution project in the city. This operation provided more than one million dollars of food and supplies to the local citizen's after being displaced by the sectarian violence that erupted in the city this past month

In the area of Hussaniyah, the platoon provided security for the Civil Affairs Team, led by MAJ Bennett. They monitored several school districts and

local markets to assess the quality of life of the local citizens. The team is also involved in: local medical operations, which provide medical care to the local national, attending meetings with local leaders, and interacting with the local population.

NIGHTHAWKS

Alpha Company

By CPT Shermer, A Co Commander & 1SG Welch, A Co 1SG

Friends and Family of Alpha Company, it has been an honor to serve with such fine Soldiers. As we close out the 11th month of the deployment, the Nighthawks begin preparations to return back to Fort Hood. The Alpha Company Soldiers continue to provide military intelligence support to the Raider Brigade and now also are getting ready for redeployment! Your Soldiers have performed exceptionally well over the past 11 months, and we are very proud of every Soldier's contributions and achievements.

It's been a long hard year. Statistics do not capture the perseverance and determination of your Soldiers who pursued combat information. But here are a few of your Soldier's accomplishments; they have conducted over 1,300 combat patrols, assisted Explosive Ordinance Disposal in over 600 combat actions, provided over 5,000 intelligence reports, flew well over 4,000 hours of UAV flight operations and provided security for the Camp Taji perimeter for over 8 months. The Nighthawks have performed duties as far away as FOB Speicher, north of Tikrit, to locations south of Baghdad. Here on Camp Taji, they have performed all over

the post; at the Detainee Holding Area Annex, the UAV launch site at the airfield, the Brigade Operations Center and the Brigade Secure Compartmentalized Information Facility. Regardless of where our Soldiers performed their duties, you passed an Alpha Company Soldier nearly everywhere you went.



SPC Brooker, HQ Platoon

The work of the Soldiers has not gone unnoticed. Three Soldiers have earned the Army Commendation with Valor, 13 Soldiers have received the Army Commendation Medal, 19 Soldiers have received the Army Achievement Medal, and over 18 Alpha Company Soldiers have received the Combat Action Badge. The Raider Brigade has also admitted two Alpha Company Soldiers to the Raider Brigade Roll of Honor. Despite the long hours, danger, and depravation, our Soldiers have stepped up to any task we have given them. Even after all of this, your sons and daughters remain committed to continue fighting for a peaceful Iraq. In fact, we have had twenty Alpha Company Soldiers re-enlist while we've been here.

We've also grown a great deal over here. Soldiers that came over here fresh from Advanced Individual Training are now battle seasoned vets. Over fifty Soldiers in Alpha Company have received a promotion over the past year, but the real change is what you see when you look into the eyes of our Soldiers.

They stand a little taller, and there is a casual resoluteness as they go about their duties that wasn't there when they started this deployment.

Words will never convey our appreciation of the hard work and sacrifices of our men and women, but we would like to take one last opportunity to thank the Alpha Company Soldiers for all of their contributions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. All of our Soldiers have contributed greatly to the success of the Brigade, the Battalion, and in our Company tasks. There have been a lot of lessons learned. Many of us have grown both personally and professionally in this year. To all of you back home that have been cheering us on, you have our sincere gratitude. We will finish this deployment strong and return home to you soon.

EAGLES

Shoot, Move, Communicate

By ISG Guillory, B Co ISG

Greetings from the Bravo Eagles! We have now entered our final month of deployment and the Bravo Troopers are still highly motivated in accomplishing their daily duties. Though the anticipation of going home has us in high spirits, we will remain vigilant until mission completion.

It is in this final month that we recognize our Soldiers for their outstanding contribution to this war effort. Our Bravo Company Soldiers have proven once again that they are much more than just "Communicators", but true "Warriors". The old slogan "Shoot, Move, Communicate" is a clear demonstration of the flawless support

provided by this multitasked company of soldiers. Through the various taskings and mission support requirements, the Eagles continuously demonstrated that they were up for the challenge and performed commendably- Job Well Done, Bravo Company!



SGT Stevens working in the LOS Shelter

Highlights this last month include: 4 reenlistments and 3 Promotions. Four Soldier reenlistments: SPC Bray, SPC Griffin, PFC Mormon, and SPC Thompson. SPC Bray and SPC Griffin chose to change their MOS. While both were 25C, SPC Bray will reclass to 31B- Military Police and SPC Griffin will reclass to 19D- Cavalry Scout. PFC Mormon, a new addition to our team, now runs Bravo Company supply operations. She reenlisted for choice of duty station. Although doing an outstanding job for the Company and Soldiers, PFC Mormon will PCS to FT Meade, Maryland upon redeployment. Last, but not least, SPC Thompson chose to reenlist for a large bonus. We thank them all for continuing to "Stay Army!" Since I have been in my duty position, the company has been recognized for its competent NCO leadership. Newly promoted to the rank of Sergeant, SGT Stevens, SGT Wright, and SGT Kelley are welcome additions to the NCO Corps

and future Bravo leaders- Congratulations to all!!



SPC Bray reenlists

To our families, friends, and new acquaintances, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your unwavering support. We are all grateful for the large volume of mail, care packages, and emails during our rotation. Your support really made a difference to us and helped us feel a little closer to home.

Eagle 7 Out.

Chaplain

"We are coming home!"

By CH (CPT) David Fell

These are words we have waited all year to hear and say. This news brings up a lot of good thoughts and feelings. These words also mean that we will all have to re-adjust to the loved ones whom we have changed and the situations we have been somewhat removed from over the past year.

What can we do to help prepare for this exciting day?

1. Attend the reunion training offered by the Rear Detachment. This training will help you adjust to the

changes in you, your children and your loved one that has been away for a year.

2. Set realistic expectations.

Realize that we all have a picture of what we think the reunion will be like, we tend to romanticize it. This can be a good thing, it is healthy to have a positive image of what it will be like. It should be positive, but realistic. Find out what your loved one is expecting and needing during the first few days home. What do your children expect? Communicate your expectations and your anticipated needs before your Soldier returns.

3. Allow time for the family and household to readjust to life together. Over the year roles and responsibilities have changed—as have our expectations of how our loved one fills these roles and responsibilities. It will take time for things to get back to “normal”. It will take time for everyone to get to know each other once again.

4. Problems? Yes, there may be adjustment problems. Old conflicts, new conflicts and discipline differences can come up at inopportune times. If problems do arise, deal with them one at a time. If one of person is not able to deal with a problem at a particular time, agree to temporally put it aside. Agree on a specific time to come together and discuss the situation when cooler heads prevail.

Have fun and enjoy the process of reuniting; and remember that it is a process. If problems arise make use of all the resources the Army has to help you and your family. The post Family Life Center and Army Community Services are just two sources of

assistance. We are also planning a marriage retreat for early March. May God bless each of you during this time of reunion with your loved one.

Phoenix 6

This is our last newsletter and I would like to thank the FRG leaders, families and friends of the Phoenix battalion for their outstanding support this past year. It has been a long and sometimes tough year for all of us and we will be happy to return home and see our friends and families!

The battalion has developed many strengths this past year becoming a tough, flexible and focused unit. Your Soldiers return to you as combat veterans – something I am sure they will be proud of for the rest of their lives! I am extremely proud of each and every one of them and I know that you are too.

I can not thank you enough for your support and understanding over the past 12 months. Happy Thanksgiving and God Bless you all! See you soon.

LTC John Cross, Phoenix 6.



To Dare Is To Do

Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding